As the time approaches for your child to start school, there are a number of things parents can do to help their child settle in easily. Here are some ideas:

On the first day of school please introduce yourself and your child to the teacher.

It often happens that when the time comes to part with Mum or Dad, your child may not want to and may get upset. With some children this may occur for the first few days until they feel comfortable and confident in their new environment. Once the child knows that you have left the school and are out of earshot, they will settle down and become interested in this new exciting world. However, if you stay around and within sight, the child will probably continue to be upset and more than likely upset many other children. So while it will be tempting to go back and comfort your child, it will only prolong their crying. Therefore to help your child, please do as we ask and leave quickly, as when left to themselves, children will settle down with our experienced teachers.

Walk with your child to school so that he or she knows the way. Even if you plan to drive most days, it’s a good idea for children to know which way to walk home, in case there is any mix up. Point out on the way the Safety House signs.

We ask that the children are collected from the classroom. If children are to feel secure it is important that they are met on time. Failure to do so may result in the child becoming upset. If your child will be travelling on a school bus, see if you can arrange for them to meet the bus driver and make the trip before school starts. Please inform the teacher if your child will be a bus traveller.

Practise with your child what they should say when asked for their name or address.

Label any school clothes your child may take off and things like lunch boxes and school bags. Show the child the label and say something like: “See, I’ve put your name here in blue texta.”

Talk about how long the school day will be in a way that the child can understand. “It’s as long as kinder but you’ll have your lunch after that and perhaps some stories, pictures and games and then I’ll come and get you.”
Choose a schoolbag or case that is a suitable size for your child. Bags should be able to accommodate library bags but should not be so big that they are awkward or heavy. It is a good idea to put an easily identifiable picture or luggage tag on the outside of the bag.

The children should wear clothing which they can easily manage (especially at the toilet, swimming times). Remember that many children wait until the last moment to go to the toilet, and clothing such as overalls can be the cause of accidents. We do have spare clothes for when accidents occur, although it’s a good idea to put a spare pair of pants in your child’s bag if you know there may be a problem. Please return any spare clothes, as it is sometimes difficult to maintain an adequate supply.

Footwear should be suitable for running and climbing (thongs are not considered suitable). Please try to buy shoes or sandals that your child can take off and put back on themselves.

It is important that each child can visit the toilet without help. They need to be able to flush the toilet and wash their hands afterwards. It is also a good idea to get boys used to using a urinal before commencing school.

Practise the art of asking “leading questions”. “What did you do today?” is invariably answered with “nothing”, whereas, “What was the nicest thing you did today?” may lead to a discussion.

Talk about the difference between recess and lunchtime. Show your child what food you have packed each morning and say when you expect it to be eaten. It has been our experience that Prep children are often unable to eat all the food that is supplied to them. This is often because they are too excited to eat much and parents tend to pack a much larger supply that they would normally give their child at home. We ask the children to take any uneaten lunch home so parents are able to gauge an appropriate amount to pack. The children are supervised when eating and they are encouraged to eat as much as possible, but we will not force a child to eat more than they feel is enough. Please pack a substantial, healthy snack. We suggest maybe a half round of sandwich and some fruit. Please keep lollies, chocolates, etc., as treats at home. Students are requested to sit in their outdoor eating areas to eat their snacks and lunch. Stress to them the importance of placing any rubbish into the bins provided – we do! – this is a tidy school.

Help your child become used to using a school crossing, and please remind them continually that it is the safest place to cross the road.

Please do not send valuable items to school.

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